

Message Text

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11

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-01 MC-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01

COME-00 EB-07 ACDA-05 /096 W
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P R 221021Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4739

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NAIROBI 7323

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI KE US

SUBJECT: KENYA DEFENCE MINISTER COMMENTS ON PRESS REPORTS RE POSSIBLE
ACQUISITION U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT

REFS: (A) NAIROBI 7148 (NOTAL)

(B) NAIROBI 7241 (NOTAL)

(C) TEHRAN 7884 (NOTAL)

1. NAIROBI NATION TODAY REPORTED THAT KENYA DEFENCE MINISTER GICHURU HAS STATED THAT "KENYA DID NOT HAVE ANY INTENTION WHATSOEVER OF BUYING SECONDHAND AMERICAN WAR PLANES, AS SUGGESTED IN A REPORT EARLIER THIS WEEK." ASKED ABOUT PRESS REPORTS THAT KENYA WOULD ACQUIRE USED F-5A SUPERSONIC FIGHTERS, GICHURU REPORTEDLY SAID: "WE ARE NOT BUYING SECONDHAND WAR PLANES OR ANY OTHER MILITARY EQUIPMENT."

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2. SINCE DEFENCE MINISTER IS CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF PRESIDENT KENYATTA, THIS STATEMENT VAY WELL REFLECT -- AS GOK OFFICIAL EARLIER SPECULATED (REF B) -- PRESIDENTIAL DECISION TO DISCONTINUE CONSIDERATION OF ACQUIRING SQUADRON OF USED F-5A'S. HOWEVER, WE WILL BE UNABLE TO OBTAIN OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION OF MEANING THIS STATEMENT FOR OUR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS UNTIL SENIOR KENYA DEFENCE OFFICIALS ARE AVAILABLE EARLY NEXT WEEK.

3. IN VIEW OF IRAN'S DECISION NOT TO AUTHORIZE TRANSFER OF F-5A/B AIRCRAFT TO KENYA (REF C), WE MAY BE IN FORTUNATE POSITION OF HAVING KENYANS WITHDRAW THEIR OFFER TO ACQUIRE THESE AIRCRAFT, THEREBY ELIMINATING NEED FOR US TO TELL KENYANS WE UNABLE TO MAKE OFFER. WHILE THIS WOULD BE UNEXPECTED FRINGE BENEFIT OF RECENT SPATE OF SPECULATIVE PRESS ARTICLES ON U.S. ARMS AID TO KENYA, KENYAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS HAVE ON BALANCE SUFFERED AS RESULT OF UNFORTUNATE PRESS BRIEFING GIVEN BY DEPARTMENT OFFICER TO LOS ANGELES TIMES CORRESPONDENT (REF A). THIS BRIEFING AND SUBSEQUENT PUBLICITY SERIOUSLY UNDERMINED GOK CONFIDENCE IN USG ABILITY TO HONOR EMBASSY'S COMMITMENT NOT TO TAKE INITIATIVE TO PUBLICIZE INFORMATION ON BILATERAL DEFENSE QUESTIONS, AN AREA WHICH KENYA REGARDS AS VERY SENSITIVE. I HOPE TIME WILL HEAL GOK WOUNDS AND ALSO HOPE THAT DEPARTMENT IN FUTURE WILL CHECK WITH EMBASSY BEFORE BRIEFING NEWSMEN OR MAKING NEWS RELEASES ON KENYAN-AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY AIRCRAFT, PROCUREMENT, PRESS COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NAIROB07323
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750291-0109
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750827/aaaaaxhj.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NAIROBI 7148
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KENYA DEFENCE MINISTER COMMENTS ON PRESS REPORTS RE POSSIBLE ACQUISITION U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT
TAGS: MILI, KE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006